

Remarks

Claims 1-41 are pending in the application.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner initial and return copies of the 1449 forms that were submitted under cover of the Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement mailed to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on January 30, 2003, and received in the USPTO on February 6, 2003.

§ 102 Rejections

Claims 1-16, 21-23, and 35-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,141,790 (Calhoun). The Office Action relies on Figure 7 of Calhoun to disclose outwardly extending protrusions “as the area of the liner located between the embossed depressions” that “penetrate the adhesive layer in the areas between the elements (75) of the adhesive layer” and “the adhesive does not contact the land or the depressed area. . .”

Calhoun teaches using a liner with depressions to serve as an embossed carrier web to generate a PSA that has “a plurality of spaced clumps of particles.” Specifically regarding Fig. 7 of Calhoun, the PSA with clump-bearing particle protrusions is contacted with a carrier web with depressions formed by embossing a crosshatched pattern of ridges. When the embossed carrier web and PSA are contacted together, the particle-coated protrusions on the PSA fit within the embossed depressions of the carrier web to protect the particles from being disturbed during storage and shipment (col. 6, lines 53-64).

Calhoun fails to disclose protrusions on the release liner layer that can reduce the contact area between the release liner layer and adhesive layer or physically penetrate the adhesive layer. Even assuming that the carrier web could be considered a liner with protrusions rather than a carrier web with depressions, the surface area of the carrier web in contact with the adhesive would not sufficiently minimize the area in contact with the adhesive to provide effective release. Using example 1 of Calhoun, 96% of the surface area of the liner would be “protrusions”. Thus, a low adhesion coating such as a silicone release coating on the liner would be necessary, as Calhoun specifies in column 7, lines 5-35. Further, Calhoun fails to disclose a release liner layer that physically penetrates the adhesive layer to substantially contact the backing layer as recited in claim 3 of Applicant’s Specification.

Accordingly, Calhoun fails to disclose each and every element of claims 1-16, 21-23, and 35-41. MPEP § 2131. Applicants respectfully submit that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 1-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in light of Calhoun. The Examiner states that Calhoun does not teach the specific attributes such as post shape, aspect ratio, density, etc. but obvious design choice or routine optimization would arrive at these dimensions.

Applicants respectfully disagree. For the reasons stated above and discussed under the 102(b) rejection, the Calhoun reference cannot be modified to render claims 1-41 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Office Action further fails to provide a teaching or suggestion to modify Calhoun to provide the dimensions of post shape, aspect ratio, protrusion density, etc. disclosed in claims 1-41 to effect a reduction in contact area. Even considering the areas between "depressions" to be protrusions, Clahoun provides no teaching to modify the area size to reduce contact area or penetrate the adhesive layer. Rather, Calhoun teaches away by specifying the size and shape of the depressions to protect the "plurality of spaced clumps of particles."

Consequently, the rejection of claims 1-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested with allowance of claims 1-41 solicited at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,

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